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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: RPG OPPOSITION LEADER RETURNS TO GUINEA

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (SBU) Alpha Conde, president of the Rally for the Guinean People (RPG) opposition political party, returned to Guinea on December 21 after an 18 month absence. According to a high level contact within the party, the RPG is not planning any immediate political activities, but said the party will meet on December 25 to determine its program. Contact said that Conde decided to return to Guinea in order to assist the party with its preparations for the legislative elections. He added that Conde has been busy working with constituents abroad, but that it is now time to focus on domestic constituents. (COMMENT. The RPG is widely perceived as a predominantly Malinke party with significant support from Upper Guinea. END COMMENT).

BIO NOTES

¶2. (SBU) Alpha Conde was born in Boke in 1940. He left Guinea in 1956 to complete his education in France where he was active in student movements and the Guinean opposition. He did not return until 1991. He has degrees in sociology, law, and political science, and is a former professor and businessman. Conde took second place in the 1993 presidential election with over 19% of the vote, and was later elected to the National Assembly in 1995.

¶3. (SBU) During the 1998 presidential election, Conde finished in third position with 17% of the vote. He had been absent from the country for an extended period of time, returning just two weeks before election day. After the election, but before the results were announced, Conde was arrested in Lola prefecture near Guinea's border with Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia, on charges of illegally attempting to cross the border. He was later charged with and found guilty of treason. He was sentenced to five years in prison, but was released in May 2001 after being pardoned by President Conde, on the condition that Conde be prohibited from political activities. Upon his release, Conde went back to France and did not return until 2005 in advance of the local elections, which the RPG ultimately boycotted.

¶4. (SBU) Conde's last visit to Guinea was in mid-2007. The local press frequently reports on Conde's political activities with the Guinean Diaspora, especially in the U.S. and Europe. He is considered a somewhat radical, but popular leader, particularly among the Malinke, with a significant support base.

COMMENT

¶5. (C) RPG contacts have been anticipating Conde's return to Guinea for months now. His seemingly sudden arrival in the midst of rumors and controversy regarding the president's

health may be noteworthy. He is considered somewhat of a polarizing political figure, capable of mobilizing massive Malinke support, but perhaps at the expense of alienating other ethnic groups and/or opposition political parties. The government seems to view Conde with suspicion, and his name has been linked to possibly treasonous plots in the past. Poloff plans to meet with Conde at the earliest opportunity.
END COMMENT.
RASPOLIC